

7. Apparatus for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source to provide a program guide, comprising:

5 a processor ~~(22, 60)~~ for acquiring program guide information in said packetized program data and for acquiring ancillary information, said ancillary information including,

(a) application software for use in processing acquired program guide information, and

(b) a directory for associating said application software with a program guide information item to be processed;

10 a processor ~~(60, 30, 37)~~ for executing said application software to process said program guide information item in forming a program guide for display; and

a display processor ~~(37, 45)~~ for conditioning said formed program guide information for display.

15 8. Apparatus according to claim 7, wherein
said application software comprises at least one of, (a) an HTML or SGML file, (b) a Java™ file, (c) an ActiveX™ file and (d) a decoder supported software language file.

20 9. Apparatus according to claim 7, wherein
said processor executes said application software to create a program guide for display.

25 10. Apparatus according to claim 9, wherein
said processor creates a special program guide for display and said special program guide includes a list of programs collated based on at least one of (a) a particular period of program broadcast, and (b) a particular category of programs.

30 11. Apparatus according to claim 10, wherein
said particular category of programs includes programs with, at least one of, (a) a particular theme or topic, (b) particular actors or directors, (c) particular User defined criteria.

35 12. Apparatus according to claim 9, wherein
said processor creates a special program guide from one or more of, (a) program guide information acquired from a broadcast source, and (b) program guide information acquired via the Internet.

13. Apparatus according to claim 9, wherein
said processor creates a special program guide comprising multimedia services
listing one or more of, (a) a DVD/VCR program available for play, (b) an Internet web site, (c) a
5 pre-stored fax/phone number for access, (d) a videophone service access item (e) a home
appliance control function.

14. Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein
in creating a special program guide, said processor acquires program guide
10 information by establishing bi-directional communication with a second source using acquisition
information including one of (a) an Internet URL, (b) an Internet IP address, (c) an Email address,
and (d) a telephone/fax/videophone number.

15. Apparatus according to claim 7, wherein
said application software comprises an object file associated with at least one of
15 (a) a broadcast program, (b) a broadcast channel and (c) User interface controls.

16. Apparatus according to claim 7, wherein
said processor executes said application software to create a User selected
20 program guide for display selected from a plurality of program guides for display.

17. Apparatus for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source,
comprising:
a processor ~~(22, 60)~~ for acquiring packetized program information including
25 ancillary information and program guide information, said ancillary information including,
(a) an object file comprising application software for use in commanding a
device, and

(b) a directory for associating said application software with a program
listed in said program guide information; and
30 a processor ~~(60)~~ using said ancillary information and for executing said
application software to command said device in processing said listed program.

18. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein
said application software performs at least one of the following functions, (a)
35 commands a VCR/DVD device to record a program at a scheduled broadcast time, (b) commands
said apparatus to tune to a particular broadcast video channel, (c) commands said apparatus to
tune to a particular broadcast audio channel.

19. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein
said application software comprises at least one of, (a) an HTML or SGML file, (b)
a Java™ file, (c) an ActiveX™ file, (d) a web browser and (e) a decoder supported software
5 language file.

20. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein
said directory lists a file associated with at least one of (a) a broadcast program,
(b) a broadcast channel, (c) User interface controls, and (d) a peripheral device attached to said
10 apparatus.

21. Apparatus according to claim 17, wherein
said ancillary information includes an object file complexity level indicator, and
said apparatus disregards object files of complexity level exceeding a
15 predetermined level.

22. Apparatus for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source
to provide a program guide, comprising:
a processor ~~(22, 60)~~ for acquiring program guide information and for acquiring
20 ancillary information in said packetized program data, said ancillary information including,
(a) a directory of object files associated with program guide information
items, and
(b) an object file complexity level indicator, and
a processor ~~(60, 30, 37)~~ for disregarding object files of complexity level
25 exceeding a predetermined level and for creating an image object from an object file and linking
said image object to a program guide information item; and
a display processor ~~(37, 45)~~ for forming a composite image including said image
object and said program guide information item to provide a program guide for display.

23. A storage medium containing digital data representing video information comprising:
- packetized program information representing a video program;
 - ancillary information including information for processing multimedia objects comprising,
 - (a) a directory of executable software application files associated with objects, and
 - (b) a map for associating an object with a program guide information item;
- and
- information for executing a software application to create an object and linking said object to a program guide information item in an image for display.
24. A method for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source to provide a program guide, comprising the steps of:
- acquiring program guide information and for acquiring ancillary information in said packetized program data, said ancillary information including,
 - (a) a directory of executable software application files associated with objects, and
 - (b) a map for associating an object with a program guide information item;
- and
- executing a software application to create an object;
 - linking said image object to a program guide information item; and
 - forming a composite image including said image object and said program guide information item to provide a program guide for display.
25. A method for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source to provide a program guide, comprising:
- acquiring program guide information in said packetized program data and for acquiring ancillary information, said ancillary information including,
 - (a) application software for use in processing acquired program guide information, and
 - (b) a directory for associating said application software with a program guide information item to be processed,
 - executing said application software to process said program guide information item in forming a program guide for display; and
 - conditioning said formed program guide information for display.

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26. A method for decoding packetized program data from at least a first source, comprising the steps of:

acquiring packetized program information including ancillary information and program guide information, said ancillary information including,

5 (a) an object file comprising application software for use in commanding a device, and

(b) a directory for associating said application software with a program listed in said program guide information; and

10 using said ancillary information to determine a program for processing by a device; and

executing said application software to command said device in processing said listed program.

27. A method for forming packetized program data to be suitable for processing in a decoder, comprising the steps of:

15 forming program guide information and ancillary information including,

(a) a directory of object files associated with program guide information items, and

20 (b) a map for associating said object files with said program guide information items;

Incorporating said ancillary information and said program guide information into packetized data for output to a transmission channel.

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